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International Congress of Free Christians and other Religious Liberals.

Pacific School of Religion Berkeley, Calif.

BULLETIN No. 1.

December, 1922.

The International Congress

OF

Free Christians and other Religious Liberals.

President:

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Vice-Presidents:

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DR. C. W. WENDTE (*Berkeley, California*).
M. LE PASTEUR ROBERTY (*Paris*).
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M. LE PASTEUR WAUTIER D'AYGALLIERS (*France*).

Treasurer:

MR. H. N. WILLIAMS,
25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., U.S.A.

Secretary:

REV. W. H. DRUMMOND,
Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

All Correspondence should be sent to the Secretary.

International Congress of Free Christians

and other Religious Liberals.

BULLETIN No. 1.

Compliments

Chas. W. Wendte

Berkeley

December, 1922.

PREFATORY NOTE.

There has been a little unavoidable delay in the publication of the first number of the Bulletin.

Owing to limits of space it has been possible to include in the present issue only two of the national surveys which were presented to the Congress at Leiden. Special articles dealing with the Liberal Christian movement in other countries will be published in future numbers of the Bulletin.

Friends of the Congress who receive the Bulletin are requested to make it known as widely as possible.

All communications about the Bulletin, or any other matter connected with the Congress, should be sent to me at Essex Hall, Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C.2.

W. H. DRUMMOND,
Secretary.

London,
December, 1922.

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THE NEXT CONGRESS.

AN APPEAL FROM THE PRESIDENT.

INTERNATIONAL liberal Christianity has held its first meeting after the war. In the quiet atmosphere of an old Dutch university town a small group of leading men and women discussed some questions of vital interest to liberal religious organisations of to-day. We have to thank all of them for the fine spirit of earnestness and responsibility in which they came together for the great work of the Congress. Whether the meeting in Leiden really was a success is a question only to be answered after two or three years, when we have seen its international consequences.

The important thing about the meeting as far as I can see was not the friendly intercourse of the delegates of many nations and languages, nor yet the interesting discussions which took place during those short days, but the simple fact, that a basis was laid for the work of the near future. The international free religious movement is at a turning point. At Leiden we saw and acknowledged that fact. Splendid work has been done by the Congress in the twenty years behind us, but the situation after the war is not what it was in Paris in 1913.

I will sum up the difference in these three sentences :—

1. It is a question of life and death that free Christianity, listening to the call of the age, should acknowledge its responsibility and should go out with its religious forces to influence the social and political world of to-day.

2. It is of the greatest importance that the youth movement of outspoken liberal religious tendencies, now springing up in some countries, should have a strong support from all the Free Christian churches ; the influence of that movement on the whole history of religious liberalism may be in course of time a very considerable one and change its character.

3. It is for the whole of Christianity and especially for its liberal movements, scattered in hopeless individualism, absolutely necessary to get more permanent international contact and organisation.

It was far beyond the power of our short Leiden meeting thoroughly and definitely to discuss these new problems, but its high importance was the fact, that it strongly emphasised as its opinion : We will go in for these questions, we want them to be considered and to be solved as far as it is ever possible to do so.

In Leiden a foundation was laid for the work now to be done. A committee was appointed and I am sure that all its members are perfectly aware of their great responsibility. They will have to do quite another sort of work than the committees preparing former congresses had to do in their days. They will have to draw out the consequences of the situation just now expounded. It will be their duty to consider the free religious message in the political and moral difficulties of our present time, to support the religious youth movement in its international tendencies, to discuss the possibility of a stronger federation of all the free religious groups in different countries.

It is not now the moment, nor is this the place to go in for any details of this work, but it will succeed only if the free religious congregations all over the world are going to interest themselves as such, as groups of liberal religious men and women, for our international work, if all of them are going to acknowledge that this is not a private concern of some leading international-minded people, but a divine call to the Christian world of to-day. The next Congress must give the proof that the Leiden meeting was the beginning and the foundation of a fine piece of work and that it had a right to assume that a broad international religious spirit is wide awake in free Christian churches and groups.

K. H ROESSINGH.

Leiden, October, 1922.

THE MEETING OF THE CONGRESS AT LEIDEN.

THE outlook and the opportunities for the Congress are both strangely different from what they were a few years ago. We cannot repeat the success of 1910 and 1913 in Berlin and Paris. It is impossible to bring such large numbers of people together. For one thing it is too expensive. Some limitation of members is necessary also, if we are to keep the balance fairly even among the different nations. Still more important is the human factor. If large numbers generate enthusiasm, a small assembly is more favourable to friendship and it is through close personal contact that real sympathy is quickened.

But the centre of gravity has also changed. The purely scientific interest in theology and the problems of historical criticism is not so keen as it was, neither are Religious Liberals so confident as they were that their cause is going to win its way by the force of logic or its inherent reasonableness. There have been solid and lasting gains. The vast resources of scholarship which were marshalled before our astonished eyes at the Berlin Congress do not represent wasted effort. Whatever eddies of opinion or reversions to an old dogmatic type may occur from time to time to disturb our confidence, there can be no real going back to an uncritical view of the Bible or to mediæval dogmas about life and the world. But now, when the future of Christian civilisation is trembling in the balance, we men of the modern world have a different task. It is not the study of the past, but creative work for the future which is of first importance.

The Congress assembled at Leiden on Tuesday, August 29. The opening meeting was held, under the presidency of Mr. R. D. Holt, in the Senate Room of the University, where the portraits of Scholten, Kuenen and Tiele formed a link between the men of this generation and the leaders of the past. Twelve nations were represented, America, England, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Hungary and Czecho Slovakia. Dr. Eliot, Dr. Wicks, the Rev. L. Cornish, the Rev. Palfrey Perkins and the Rev. E. Shippen were present from America. The English delegation included Mr. R. D. Holt, Mr. C. Sydney Jones, Miss Ruth Nettlefold, Miss Brooke Herford, Dr. Gow, Dr. Mellone, Mr. Harold Baily, the Rev. R. Nicol Cross, the Rev. Basil Martin, and the Rev. J. C. Flower. There was a notable group of French ministers, including Pastor Wautier d'Aygalliers, the successor of Charles Wagner at the Foyer de l'Ame in Paris, Pastor Fayot of Nîmes and Pastor Dupont of Montpellier. With them were M. Paul Teissonnière of Brussels and Pastor Rey of Liège. Germany sent Professors Rade and

Hermelinck of Marburg, Pfarrer Kübel of Frankfort, Miss Carola Barth of Mülheim Pastor Dindorf of Hamburg and Pastor Walbaum of Alzey. Professor Beth and his wife were present from Vienna, Professor and Signora Puglisi from Florence, Dr. and Mrs. Čapek from Prague, the Rev. N. Jozan and the Rev. G. Csiki from Budapest, Professor Rochat from Geneva, and Pastor Kierkegaard from Copenhagen. The notable Dutch delegation included, Professors Eerdmans, Roessingh, Windisch and Heering of Leiden, Dr. Eldering of Rotterdam, Dr. Knappert of Leiden, Dr. van Mourik Broekman of Breda, and Dr. H. G. van Wijngaarden of Amsterdam.

Professor Eerdmans spoke a few words of welcome to which Mr. R. D. Holt replied in an address which emphasised the basal principles of the Congress, its freedom and tolerance and its emphasis upon Christianity as a way of life. The Secretary then presented some letters of greeting and apology. These included one from Dr. Carpenter, full of regret that for the first time he was compelled to be absent, and a long message from Dr. Wendte, the intrepid pioneer of the movement. His words were full of ardent conviction and large-hearted sympathy. In his old age he is still a young dreamer of dreams.

A long and important session was devoted to a series of papers on the conditions existing in various countries with special reference to the expansion of the work of Liberal Christianity. While the conditions vary greatly in different countries, there are many common features, favourable and the reverse. On the one hand the tendency to forsake Christianity for some exotic cult is fairly prevalent; on the other there are signs of disastrous forms of reaction into dogmatism and crude millenarian dreams. It is the testimony of many countries that a large number of people is detached from the old forms of religion and that they are unlikely to find their way back into Christianity through the influence of traditional orthodoxy. There is a desire for new forms and a sense of their need without any clear idea of the way in which we are to set to work in order to create them. It is a situation full of peril and at the same time rich in opportunity for bold and constructive effort. In the evening of the same day the Congress service was held in the Remonstrant Church. Dr. Knappert officiated, and short sermons were preached in German, French, and English by Professor Rade, Pastor Teissonnière, and Dr. Gow from a common text "Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free."

The most important day of the Congress was Wednesday, August 30, when the two special subjects 'The Youth Movement' and 'The Moral Background of Modern Society' came up for discussion. The first was treated in two papers by Lic. Carola Barth and Professor Roessingh. At the close of the discussion it was resolved to refer the whole matter of Students' Leagues and Young People's Societies to the Committee with special

instructions to encourage the organisation and federation of such societies in all the countries represented in the Congress. The paper on ' The Moral Background of Modern Society ' was read by Professor Heering of Leiden. It dealt with the present situation in view of the break-up of traditional standards and the prevailing moral unrest in a most suggestive way. It was felt that this was also a subject which should receive the close attention of the Committee during the coming months with a view to the preparation of a report.

The business session of the Congress was fruitful in many suggestions. Professor Rade brought forward a series of resolutions dealing with general principles and practical policy. He emphasised the need of much closer contact with other countries through a systematic use of periodical literature. He also pleaded that the Congress as the guardian of the common interests of Liberal Christianity should take steps to come to the help of countries which have been greatly impoverished, where books of the Liberal Faith cannot be published, magazines which represent the same cause are ceasing to appear and scholars devoted to the scientific study of religion find it impossible to live. All these matters will receive the serious attention of the Committee. There was a strong feeling that a bulletin should be issued from time to time to represent the interests of the Congress and to keep the constituent groups in close touch with one another.

In the case of such a widely scattered body, its future must depend upon the wise direction of its officers and committee. In this respect the Congress may be considered singularly fortunate. The new President is Dr. Roessingh, the successor of Chantepie de la Saussaye in the chair of the Philosophy of Religion at Leiden. The four vice-presidents are Dr. J. Estlin Carpenter (England), Dr. C. W. Wendte (America), Monsieur le Pasteur Roberty (France) and Professor Rade (Germany). The Committee, which has been kept small enough for real consultation and occasional meetings, is as follows : The President and Vice-presidents, Miss Carola Barth (Germany), Miss Westenholz (Denmark), Monsieur le Pasteur Wautier d'Aygalliers (France), Professor Rochat (Switzerland), the Rev. Palfrey Perkins (America), and Dr. Mellone (England). The Treasurer is Mr. H. M. Williams of Boston, U.S.A. The Rev. W. H. Drummond retains his position as Secretary.

So much by way of a bare outline of the proceedings and their formal results. But many things happened at Leiden, which it is hard to put into words. Spiritual atmosphere can be felt but it cannot be described. Reconciling influences which break down barriers and restore old friendships between men and nations are impalpable things, but they are real. Much was said in private which will never have a reporter. Occasionally there was a feeling of grievance or antagonism in the air, springing from racial differences

or the bitter memories of the war. But candour and Christian courtesy won the victory, and the Congress succeeded in reaching a new and better understanding. It was a feeling that some stone of stumbling, which made Christian charity difficult, had disappeared when fellow-workers for the Kingdom from different countries took one another by the hand and looked into one another's eyes.

All this was possible because the Congress met in Holland in an atmosphere of overflowing kindness and charming hospitality. Numerous families received the delegates into their homes. After the service on Tuesday evening there was an informal reception, all the more attractive on account of its simplicity, when the eager flow of talk almost drowned the sound of a thunderstorm outside. The next evening we were the guests of our Dutch friends at Warmond, a delightful excursion by boat followed by dinner. We availed ourselves of the opportunity to express our thanks, and assuredly it was no empty form of words, for all that had been done for us. Special mention was made of the services of Professor Roessingh, the Secretary of the Dutch Committee, to whom the success of the meeting and the fine spirit of Christian brotherhood and optimism which marked the proceedings were chiefly due. The speakers were the President (Mr. R. D. Holt), Professor Rade (for Germany), Pastor Wautier (for France), and the Rev. L. Cornish (for America).

On Friday, September 1, many of the delegates were present at a meeting in the Church of the " Vrije Gemeente," Amsterdam, the remarkable movement founded by Mr. Hugenholz, over which Dr. Wijngaarden now presides. Addresses were given by Dr. Wijngaarden, Dr. S. A. Eliot, Professor Rade, Pastor Wautier d'Aygalliers and Dr. Čapek.

RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE CONGRESS AT LEIDEN.

I.

After the reading and discussion of the papers by Lic. Carola Barth and Professor Dr. Roessingh the subject of the Youth Movement was referred to the International Committee for consideration and report.

II.

After the reading and discussion of the paper by Professor Dr. Heering on ' The Moral Background of Modern Society ' the subject was referred to the International Committee for consideration and report.

III.

Proposed by Rev. Dr. S. A. Eliot, of Boston, U.S.A.

That the Congress heartily endorses the establishment and maintainance in Holland of a Central Bureau for the Young People's Societies and Students Leagues that are animated by the Free Christian spirit and that the Executive Committee be authorised and requested to co-operate in this undertaking and to encourage the organisation and federation of such societies in all the countries represented in the Congress.

IV.

Proposed by Herr Professor Dr. Martin Rade, of Marburg.

1. Die Konferenz stellt mit Genugtuung fest, dass die Arbeit einer freien theologischen Wissenschaft in ihren Methoden und Ergebnissen bis tief in die orthodox-konservativen Kreise der Kirchen hinein ihre nicht wieder rückgängig zu machende Wirkung getan hat.

2. Sie erkennt die Gefahr, dass unter den mystischen, enthusiastischen und sozialen Interessen der heutigen Generation die schlichte Wahrheitsfrage und ihre Pflege leicht zu kurz kommen kann, und sieht eine ernste Aufgabe darin, dieser Gefahr gegenüber das Erbe einer freien theologischen Wissenschaft zu wahren und für Fortsetzung dieser wissenschaftlichen Arbeit zu wirken.

3. Die Konferenz betreibt zu diesem Zwecke den Zusammenschluss aller fromm und frei gerichteten Elemente in den Kirchen und ausserhalb der Kirchen, zunächst und insbesondre im Protestantismus, beauftragt ihr leitendes Komittee alle dazu geeigneten Schritte zu tun und erklärt eine Fortführung der seit 1900 bestehenden Weltkongresse des freien Christentums für einen wichtigen Weg zu diesem Ziel.

4. Die Konferenz sieht die geschichtliche Aufgabe des freien Christentums als der notwendigen Fortsetzung der Reformation des 16. Jahr-hunderts

(*a*) in der Vertretung eines reinen, von aller Gesetzlichkeit und Engherzigkeit befreiten Glaubensbegriffs, und

(*b*) in der Propagierung eines internationalen und interkonfessionellen Willens zu einer grossen Gemeinschaft der Kinder Gottes in der Liebe.

5. Unbeschadet aller sonstigen Weite ihres Horizonts stellt die Konferenz ihre Arbeit zunächst und vornehmlich in den Dienst des Gesamt-protestantismus.

Ihr Ziel ist : ein Gesamtprotestantismus, innerhalb dessen der Liberalismus eine anerkannte und bedeutende Stimme hat.

Haupt mittel dazu : die systematische Gewinnung der verwandten Elemente in allen Kirchen und Denominationen.

6. Es gilt, der freien theologischen Wissenschaft energisch zu helfen, besonders in den verarmenden Ländern

(*a*) durch Unterstützung junger Gelehrter, damit sie ihrer Wissenschaft leben können,

(*b*) durch Unterstützung literarischer Produktion (Bücher, Zeitschriften).

7. Man soll den geistigen Austausch unter uns ganz anders pflegen als bisher : gegenseitige Oeffnung und Benutzung unserer periodischen Presse über die Grenzen hinüber.

V.

Proposed by M. le Pasteur P. Teissonnière, of Brussels.

Le Congrés donnera son appui entier à tout effort ayant pour objet d'établir et de maintenir entre les peuples des rapports juridiques, et d'exclure la guerre de l'avenir du monde.

VI.

Proposed by the Rev. E. R. Shippen, of Boston, U.S.A.

Whereas spiritual leadership is always a prime necessity, and at present the desperate need of the times ; and whereas a trained ministry is chiefly to be depended upon for such leadership,— Resolved, that the Congress, collectively and through its individual members pledges itself to earnest efforts to recruit the ranks of the liberal Christian ministry, searching for young men and young women of character and intellect, and impressing upon them the opportunity of human service offered by the liberal ministry.

LETTERS OF GREETING.

I.

From Dr. J. E. CARPENTER.

11 Marston Ferry Road,
Oxford.
August 15, 1922.

Dear Mr. Drummond,

You kindly invite me to send a few words of greeting to the friends who assemble at Leiden to consult together concerning the best means of strengthening and developing our common work for Liberal Religion. With the memories of so many happy and fruitful gatherings since 1901, I deeply regret that the infirmities of age and recent illness debar me from attendance.

We are all convinced that the only real power which can ultimately heal the wounds of our disordered state lies in that Life in the Spirit which will lift us above rivalry and suspicion

and fear into righteousness and peace and goodwill. To gain that life ourselves and to diffuse it among others is our united aim. It is not confined to any one Church or to any particular theology. In varying forms it belongs to all. But for its fullest manifestation it needs two essential conditions, freedom and sympathy. From different modes of dogmatic control we have joined in the age-long quest for Truth, and we seek to learn the meaning of each other's experience, and feel the value of combined endeavour. Much may be done by correspondence and exchanges of literature, but still more by personal intercourse, when new hopes are awakened, new energies are aroused, and mutual confidence is established. We need each other's support in the high tasks that lie before us. May your meeting be fruitful in sound cousel and wise effort, and may God's grace sustain us all in brotherly union and enduring faith. Faithfully yours,

J. Estlin Carpenter.

II.

From Dr. C. W. WENDTE.

Berkeley, California.
July 12, 1922.

My dear Mr. Drummond,

In responding to your request that I send a communication of goodwill and friendly counsel to our fellow-workers in the International Congress of Free Christians and Other Religious Liberals, on the occasion of their forthcoming meeting in Leiden next month, I beg to assure you of my sincere regret that I shall be unable to attend its sessions and participate in its conferences for speedy and full resumption of its free religious and missionary activities. It will be the first time in over twenty years that I have been absent from one of its sessions.

The world-war necessarily interrupted our series of congresses, so brilliantly maintained and so significant and helpful to the cause of "pure religion held in the spirit of perfect liberty." Nevertheless by means of a diligent correspondence and sundry kind services, the widely extended membership of the Congress remained in faithful and fraternal relations with our Central Committee and with each other. The cessation of actual hostilities in Europe enabled us to resume our public meetings by holding in Boston, U.S.A., in October 3–7, 1920, the seventh International Congress of our Association. The published report of this session, modest in size, bears witness to our continuity of purpose, and to the undiminished needs and opportunities which justify our existence, as a bond of union between the liberal religious forces of the world.

We now look to the coming gathering in Leiden this summer for a confirmation of our hopes and aims in these respects. May your conference promote the spirit of mutual confidence and good will, overcoming in your own hearts any lingering animosities arising from the collision of national interests and duties, and enabling you, as a representative body of religious liberals and progressives, to formulate a definite and conciliatory policy for our Association which shall lead to united and effective action thereafter in behalf of religious freedom, good will and peace in a reconstructed world.

The reactionary tendencies in church and state which are the common and deplorable inheritance of all natlons engaged in the recent struggle, give us an additional reason for existence as a useful agency for promoting tolerance, progressive opinions, and a spiritual, rather than a dogmatic religion. To hearten and encourage the minorities which in all lands are bravely striving for religious freedom and a rational faith ; to bring into fraternal and helpful relations with each other the scattered individuals and congregations, the world over, who are seeking and maintaining advanced and unpopular opinions on religious and ethical topics ; to comfort and aid the victims of political and ecclesiastical oppression in their demands for liberty, justice and equal religious rights—these are among our aims as an international and religious Association. They are surely important and timely enough to warrant our continued existence, and to inspire us with ardor, devotion and self-sacrifice, as in a holy cause.

What the World Alliance for International Friendship through the Churches is doing so nobly and effectively for the general reconciliation of a war wasted world and for the spiritual uplift of Christendom, our Association is called upon to do specifically for the liberal teachers and congregations, of whatever name or confession, race or worship, the world over.

Alas ! the work is great but the laborers are few, aud during the din and stress of recent years they have but too often lost touch with one another. Others again, and of our most loyal and best, have closed their eyes on the disorder and strife of their time and entered into eternal peace. The President of our Paris Congress of 1913, Professor Emil Boutroux, eminent as a thinker, but still more endeared to us by the beauty of his spirit, the loftiness of his character, and his spiritual faith, has recently passed away from earth. In Strassbourg, Professor Paul Lobstein, an accomplished scholar and noble man, a firm friend of our Congress, is no more among us. In Russia, Professor H. von Merczyng, the historian of the Protestant Church in Poland, and an ardent lover of religious liberty and progress, who participated in our Berlin Congress, has fallen a victim to the social upheaval in that country. In Germany, we deplore the loss of Professor von Soden, a learned scholar and protagonist of liberal Christian faith, who addressed

our Berlin Congress in 1910. The memory of these fellow-workers is blessed among us.

In the good hope that I shall be able to attend the next session of our Congress if it should be called at not too remote a date, I remain

Fraternally yours,

CHARLES W. WENDTE.

CONGRESS PAPERS.

THE YOUTH MOVEMENT IN GERMANY.

By LIC. CAROLA BARTH.

Translated from the German by MISS A. I. ROYSTON.

THE German "Youth Movement" is a bit of Life, and it is always difficult to place real life in the scheme of logical definition. It is therefore in the nature of the case that any attempt to give a cut and dried definition must necessarily be one-sided and inadequate. For it is just a mark of living, youthful energy, that the struggling powers of the soul have not yet been petrified into a fixed form, that opposites are in hard conflict, that out of the depth of spiritual experience and intuition new forms are continually appearing. The old has clearly defined programmes, statutes, rules—the very nature of youth implies a lack of foresight, a wish for freedom from restraint. Statements about the spiritual, moral, or religious value of the Youth Movement are therefore to be compared to pictures of the moment, to snapshots, and as such possess a certain temporary and local value; any attempt however at generalisations necessarily sinks to the level of an artificially grouped picture.

In speaking of the "Youth Movement," we distinguish it from the idea of Youth Welfare, *i.e.*, from all those Societies for the care of Youth which owe their aims and their mental cast to the guiding care of grown-up people. Although in the last few years they have adopted the external forms, nay even the spirit of the Youth Movement, the fact remains they were not the creator of this spirit. Rather did it break in upon their circles, bubbling up irresistibly from a strong inward source. For us to-day it is a question of the original spirit of the Youth Movement, as it first took form in the "Wandervögel"* and therefore we turn to the real source.

* It is impossible to give an exact English equivalent to this word which combines in one picturesque phrase the vagrant spirit of the open road and the joyous freedom of a bird.

The German Youth Movement owes its origin neither to the war nor to the revolution; the beginnings of the Movement go back to the last years of the nineteenth century. It is the protest of young, unbroken spirits against the superficial veneer of Culture (Unkultur), dreary, shallow materialism, the useless waste of body and spirit in soul-destroying compulsory work and in the insipid, joyless intoxication of pleasure. On its free flights out of the wilderness of bricks and mortar of the great city the "Wandervögel" discovered the tonic, healthy joy of possessing the power of individual achievement and venture. On happy tours on foot the minds of the "Wandervögel" were opened to the significance of German popular sentiment, folk-song and folk-dance. A new, healthy, happy spirit awoke, hardy and fresh as a storm in Spring, the spirit of revolt against the hypocritical form of a dead and dying world. On October 12, 1913, on the Hohe Meissner this spirit found expression in the Meissner formula in which thirteen Associations of "Wandervögel" and kindred groups united as "Free German Youth." The formula runs as follows: "'The Free German Youth' will of its own determination and on its own responsibility mould its life with true sincerity. In all circumstances it firmly maintains this inner freedom." The Free German Youth set up the individual rights of youth in opposition to the echoing of the truths of others, to the being guided and educated, to the unconditional bowing before the authority and will of their elders especially of their parents and teachers; the only guide they recognised was true sincerity. War and Revolution gave the Youth Movement fresh power. For they broke a bond which hitherto had been almost uninjured, the bond to the old idea of the State and its consequences. And out of the chaos of the Revolution in wide circles the will of Youth became clarified—the will to construct, redeem, to find new forms. In that way the Youth Movement has won an immediate, reconstructive value. Even though in view of the whole its influence is naturally weak, its steadfast will to create natural, healthy, true forms of life, a purer social life, a more natural intercourse between the young of both sexes is rapidly gaining ground. Particularly worthy of notice is the hard fight which is being waged by the "Jugendringen" (a union of various Youth Groups) in the big towns against the Cinema and obscene literature, dancing-saloons and bars, tobacco and alcohol.

At this point attention must be drawn to a serious danger, a danger which is arising in a menacing form everywhere, where fettered forces are making way with explosive power, when bold aims and endeavours become the common property of a mass movement. That which in the Leader is urgent necessity of thought and action sinks in the mass to trivial stupidity or is changed into wild, destructive fanaticism. Thus, for example, the protest, in its essential meaning so amply justified against the dull and often

so lifeless curriculum in many of the High Schools, the healthy feeling that new relations should be formed between teachers and pupils, that fresh methods of education must be discovered, deteriorated into a wild revolt against the schools and the teachers. Many youths gave way to unrestrained rudeness to their parents and family and from hate and indifference to the older generation sprang an unparalleled self-conceit; "Youth in itself and out of itself is creative. As such it is unconditionally superior to age!"

But this caricature must on no account rob us of the joy in the true spirit of the Youth Movement. There are no strong waves which do not at the same time stir up mud and dirt. And the fact that the Youth Movement has attracted thousands to a life of purity, to simple naturalness and sincerity, to a joy in the spirit and in beauty, and that this will arise with elemental force out of Youth itself, is of far greater importance than the eccentricities of those who were lacking in balance.

But now we must come to the most important question. *In what relation does the Youth Movement stand to religion?* Of course no plain answer can be given, and what I said in my introduction holds good in this case also. There are no definite relations between the Youth Movement and religion. The "Wandervogel," the embryo-cell of the Youth Movement, was not organised on a religious basis. Hans Blüher, the well-known leader and historian of the "Wandervogel" movement has spoken words of gross impertinence about Christianity, the Catholic and Evangelical clergy and Luther. In his history he regards the turning of large numbers of the "Wandervogel" movement to religion as a sign of decay. But let us not forget that the time in which the "Wandervogel" movement was born, it was in 1896, was terribly lukewarm with regard to religion, and as the chief strength of the Youth Movement lies in the revolt against inner fetters, they protested against fixed forms, against the Church, Dogma, and Religious Instruction. However, they remained purely negative. The time had not yet come for individual religious development. To-day, however, the newly-awaked, strong need for ultimate values is naturally reflected in youth, nay, the religious feeling burns so brightly there that in a guide book for Youth, 'The Young Seed,' Joachim Broeckh is able to write in 1921: "The time is fulfilled. We trace clearly in the whole Youth Movement a secret tension something similar to that which kept the Jews in a state of excitement until a man sent from God arose by the Jordan and cried: 'Repent ye (change your hearts and minds) for the Kingdom is at hand!' From the very beginning this consciousness has existed in the Youth Movement. We are at bottom a religious movement; it is indeed a matter of inner experience that the newly-discovered quality of existence is to be attributed equally to Youth and Religion. And all of us who had this experience as young people confess that it is so. What moves us in the deepest depths, what

really makes us one and what makes us speak with hushed awe of fellowship, is a deep, religious yearning. We were seized by the eternal."

These are the words of one of the Youth Movement! His confession is naturally one-sided and does not apply to the whole. But one thing is certain, that in wide circles of the Youth Movement, Religion has become a fundamental question, for the solution and value of which a hard struggle is being made, Hans Blüher who in his 'History of the Wandervögel' says that the Christian point of view is at its last gasp, who compares the religious life to the hollow-eyed, pale, despairing and decaying Romantic, has now published a work on the Excellence of Jesus of Nazareth.

But with all the manysidedness of the outer form there is one trait common to wide circles of religious-minded youth, namely their non-adherance to the Church. The Church has become a fixed restraint; narrowed by dogma and precept it seems incapable of representing what is most personal and most intimate, and here the Youth Movement really does touch upon a vulnerable spot in our form of religious life. In their refusal to accept the creeds and decrees of certain circles which are now striving for supremacy in our German churches, in their antipathy towards a Church, void of the power of genuine faith, in their demand for a new form of expression of religious experience and religious fellowship, I am sure they find us Liberal Christians altogether on their side. Now and again, for example in Berlin, "Wandervögel" have tried to hold services in the church in their own way, with folk-songs, old melodies and simple addresses from clergymen who are in sympathy with them. But of course no very far reaching effect can be expected from such individual attempts. On the other hand deep religious impressions have been made on young people by Haas Berkow, who, with a troop of young men and maidens, chiefly taken from the "Wandervögel," revived the old German Mystery Plays. They journeyed from town to town and in an impressive manner made the old symbolic pictures in which the Middle Ages conceived the mystery of Death and Redemption live again before many thousands of school-boys and girls.

The young people choose their religious leaders without any regard for those preferred by the official Church. Francis of Assisi and the German Mystics, Ekehard, Tauler, Suso are in good report with them. They also find devotion and inspiration in the sacred writings of the Far East. Among modern writers the religious ideas of a Franz Werfel, Stefan Georg and Rainer Maria Rilke exercise a strong influence upon them. Haas Berkow and his followers are Anthroposophists. The religion of young people is influenced by much that is unclear, undefined, fleeting; in this respect it is a faithful mirror of older generations hungering after new religious emotion. Often a quickly passing rapture takes the place of inner power, pure Nature-worship, solemn moods on mountain-

top or in forest-depths, or a moment of exaltation on Midsummer Night's Festival all too often supplant a wrestling faith in God and produce inner weakness and moral slackness. Muck Lamberty, a young "Wandervogel," by profession a tradesman and turner, is an example of that. After the manner of "Wandervögel" he wandered through Thüringia with 25 young men and maidens. He gathered children and adults to folk-dances in the meadows and then he spoke in words of deep conviction of conversion and repentance, of a life of inner purity, flooded by the spirit of God. Though he was a Roman Catholic, Evangelical pastors offered him their pulpits, and after his address the church resounded with Luther's hymn, "A mighty stronghold is our God," followed by a hymn to the Virgin Mary. Many began to talk of a religious movement and revival, until Muck himself broke the spell by a grave act of immorality; he, the proclaimer of a pure life, had stumbled himself and thus forfeited his leadership.

There is also no lack of attempts to find some new, fixed form for the religious life. Professed disciples of Jesus have formed a "New Work Movement" and have endeavoured to found a Christian Socialist community in settlements at Sannertz and Habbertshof. But at the present moment this "New Work" is also falling to pieces for lack of a sound economic basis.

But let these special examples suffice; they might be multiplied by many others, no less important. However, I only wish to point out the spirit of the movement, not to give a complete picture. Reluctantly, all too aware of the sketchiness of what I have offered, I conclude my description and come now to the last, important question, viz., the question of our attitude to the movement.

I was extremely glad to see that the Congress had placed the "Youth Movement in Europe" on its Agenda, for surely if any question is deserving of international interest it is this. The new generation, which regards the work of the old with strong criticism, with bitterness and indignation, is growing up in the Youth Movement, and, thank God, it may give us hope and promise! Youth is going its way on its own responsibility and any interference by the older generation is a mistake. But just as it is certain that there is no such thing as a pure culture of Youth, and that youth is constantly drawing consciously or unconsciously that which is of value from the thought world of grown-up people; so it is equally certain that we as Teachers, as Ministers, as Parents must offer youth what is worth having. Only we must be the elder friends and comrades of youth, not feeling ourselves their superiors and judges; then the barrier will fall which formerly, all too often, separated age from youth, the barrier, namely, erected by the insistance of the right to authority on account of age. Youth and age differ physically but there is never an essential difference between them psychically, and those who are not fettered in forms and formality, those who feel they are still learning remain always

young. If that is our attitude to youth, we shall gain their confidence and at the same time we shall be confronted by a serious duty. Only by the force of one's own complete sincerity and one's own religious experience can we awake in youth the feeling for the inexorable seriousness and the power of a real consciousness of God. How can this be done? To that no answer can be given; it is in each individual case at bottom a question of divine mystery, of the grace of God.

In the youth annual, "Young Seed," a young man, says, "And the Voice came, guard the flame and go out into the darkness and kindle all that desires to burn. That was our call! We must serve. We are neither holy, worthy nor illumined, and yet we must! O glad day when the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined!"

Let this inner Must be sacred to us and constrain even us—then we shall find the right way to the heart of Youth!

FREE CHRISTIANITY AND THE YOUTH MOVEMENT.

By Professor Dr. Roessingh.

I will begin with stating a personal conviction and a Dutch experience. The personal conviction is this: I have a strong belief in the importance of international contact of free religious young people. I think it to be a question of the first order that the younger generation of free Christians should have another spiritual outlook on the world than is prevailing in most middle-aged people of to-day.

The Dutch experience is this, that Holland—as far as I know—is the only country in the world with a strong free religious organisation, first of students and secondly of other young people outside university circles, both eagerly looking out for international collaboration, because they understand the spiritual situation of this time, and know that their faith in God implies a call for international religious work.

These two facts, partly of a personal, partly of a national character may be the excuse for a representative of one of the smallest nations of the world to undertake an exposition of some problems of an international youth-movement on free religious lines.

My first point is this: In all nations, where liberal theology has had its influence and more than that, where a liberal conception of religious life or—if you don't like the word "liberal," as I do not like it—where a free religious spirit is a living force, in all these nations we urgently want two things: a free religious students league—whatever its name may be—and a league of all

the younger people up from 18–30 years outside the university world. Why a students league ?

Because it is of the utmost importance that the intellectual leaders in state and society in the immediate future should be people of a religious spirit. More distinctly : that they should be, if possible, men and women, orthodox or liberal, that does not matter in the first place, for whom God is the great real force in the history of their own soul, so that religious energy and self-denial are flowing into their life ; or—if I am asking too much—that they may understand at any rate the holiness and earnestness of real religion. In the last ten or twenty years—if I am not mistaken—there has been an upheaval, an awakening of first-hand religion in the hearts of the younger generation all over the world. It does not very often lead in the ways of ordinary church-Christianity, but I would not hesitate to say, that here at least, in these movements of young people, there is to be found something of what we have lacked so badly in most liberal religious movements of modern times,—personal enthusiasm, the spirit of revival. If I may judge from my contact with German universities and the knowledge I have gained about student life in other countries from books and periodicals, it seems quite clear, that it is not the critical problems and dogmatical questions of an older type of liberalism which are the moving forces, but the longing for personal life, personal contact with God, and personal understanding of our call in the world of to-day.

If free Christianity is not going in for these problems, now, when the world of students is looking out for spiritual leaders, it may throw away one of the finest opportunities it has ever had to broaden the case of free religion. With the student movements in many countries it may be a question of now or never.

So one of the first duties of the leading people in liberal Christianity and in free religion is to look out for some organisation of the students in their universities, according to the different situations in the different countries. Of course, a free religious movement will lay hold on only a small section of the students. Most of them, who are religiously interested, are in one way or another connected with the World Federation of Christian Students the great creation of John Mott, even when they are quite liberal and free in their outlook on the world. I am a great friend of the World Federation and admire the splendid work these Christian students have done and are doing for Christ's sake in the whole world, and for my part I should not like to draw one student out of the Federation, who finds his God there ; but unless the World Federation thoroughly changes its basis and some of its essential articles, it never can lay hold on that large mass of students, whose religious life is moulded by quite new spiritual movements. Its own great traditions and the force and importance of its own strongly orthodox section must keep back the World Federation

from working on a really broad and undogmatic basis and from ever taking in cordially and freely large numbers of free religious students. So my conclusion at this point must be: we have to look out for our own student movement, organised at each university, in every nation, with the unity of international spirit and of international co-operation behind it. We have to look out for that; we have to take it in hand.

I am speaking all the while from our own experience in Holland. There is no reason at all to be very enthusiastic about liberal Christianity in Holland. Many congregations are as dead as can be; many churches are empty or almost so; liberal Christianity is not a popular, strong, spiritual force, either here, nor, I think, anywhere in the world, it is rather unorganised and lacking in spiritual fervour and in broad outlook on social and international questions, but we have our young people's movement and that is a great thing in the midst of this rather poor-looking mass of Dutch liberal Protestantism. I am thinking about our students league in the first place.

It is no use here to describe its history, that is rather short—a history of seven years only—nor its work, its students conferences in the summer, five days of camp life in the open country, in a spirit of devotion and of perfect joyfulness, with lectures on personal life in the first place, and always again on personal life—and on the great problems of the time, its short conferences in winter, its special conferences for law-students, for medical students, for social questions, for the political claims of our time—always from the standpoint of free religion—its camp-work for boys and girls, done in a real modern missionary spirit, its small reading-circles in ordinary university life, its weekly paper with big discussions by the students themselves, with its own home, within the next few months, where up to eighty students can live together in a fine part of the country for week-end conferences, for meetings of all sorts—not these outward things are the essentials of it, but the spirit is all. It is no good idealising a movement that has all the weaknesses and quarrels of all poor human work, but here is a fact, a reality, and there *is* something in it. And the older and younger students, who are at the heart of the movement, who are forming the inner circle, studying medicine, or law or technics or even theology, know from their own experience that there *is* something in it. Between all the fun and jokes and dancing in a conference there is in the lectures and in the devotional services and more yet in the whole spirit of common family life, a simplicity and an earnestness that are touching.

One of our German friends who was with us this summer in a students conference, one day said: "If you will get in real religious community with the boys and girls of 14 and 16 of your youth-clubs, go out with them camping in the open, sleeping in a farm for three or four days and it is all right." Well, so it is: go out and

have a conference with some 50 or 100 students and with four or five lecturers, who strike the personal note and who have a little bit of the passion of real religion in their hearts, and it is all right. Heath and woods there are all over the world, I suppose, students there are in all countries ; well, that is all we want. We have simply to go and to do our work. For the sake of the students, for the sake of free religion, for the sake of God.

We speak in these days a great deal about the ideals of free religion and of the force and greatness of liberal Christianity. Well, it seems to me that free religion and liberal Christianity are not very strong forces in the world of to-day. Roman Catholicism and the old, well founded dogmatic systems of orthodox Protestantism can smile rather quietly on our work and our plans. And what is far worse, even spiritually liberal Protestantism in matters of religion is not as a rule so much finer and deeper and of a higher standard than other religious movements are. But here is a way to get on ; not to speak, but to act, to do a great work of real influence. We are very thankful to some German professors and students, who, on their return from a visit to our camps, took up again old plans and founded a work in Schulpforta, the " Societas Portensis," that one day must have a great moral and spiritual influence in Germany. Especially this German movement is teaching us very clearly, how different the situation is in different countries and how immense the difficulties and the contrasts may be even in one nation. And when on Monday night, just the evening before the beginning of our congress, we had a quiet and informal talk in our students' home here in Leiden with some of our delegates, all in some contact with student life, we saw again, that in this respect England is not like Germany, and that certainly Catholic nations like France and Italy and Austria are not like Holland and America. The problem, before which we stand is not a small one, and will bring many disappointments to all who are going in for it, but there are moments in the history of mankind in which you feel : now it simply must be done. Whoever knows the moral situation of Europe on the one side and the purifying and renewing force of religion, of the Gospel, of Christ on the other side, will yield : it simply has to be done now.

So far about the student movement. In the second place there is the youth movement in the broader sense of the word, including all the younger people from 13 or 14 years to 30 or 35 years of age. The problems are of the same type, but of course they are more complicated. It is not necessary at all to emphasise difficulties, which are quite clear and a matter of course. There are in this big mass of young people all the differences of culture and education, there is the financial question, there is the question of holidays which give an opportunity to get out of the round of daily life and have a meeting and a conference. As far as I know there is some sort of free religious work in the circles of these young

people in all Protestant nations. But there is a difference between working for young people and having a real youth movement. I don't know whether many nations have what you call a youth movement. Germany has, we in Holland have in the last few years, but I cannot tell how far other countries have gone that way. A national youth movement presupposes some organisation of all the small local clubs, some unity of spirit, some unity of purpose. A youth movement in that sense is not a thing scattered about in little pieces all over the country, depending on the goodwill and the activity of a local minister, but it is a union, a league with a centre and with some committee and some people who push the whole forward. A movement like that with all its parts as sections of the whole must also have its conferences and its work outside the little circle of local interests.

Here again is a work to be done. I think we now see much better than we saw it twenty years ago, what it means for the young people in our offices, for young working people—if they will come, for housemaids and servants, to come out for a short time from their daily life, to meet other people from other towns, to hear other things—all of it of course in a spirit of free religion, for that is the essential, that is what must broaden their lives and give them a new spirit, a new social spirit too. I think I would give much of our ordinary minister's work, some preaching and some study of Hebrew and Greek, if we could instead of that draw all our ministers together in one big united work for younger people.

A good deal of work of this character but in smaller proportions is being done now, very good work in Sunday-schools with excursions and camps, for older boys and girls. But what is wanted is this again: more organisation nationally and internationally. This is essential in a free religious movement, that really pretends to be a world movement, because it knows its call with respect to the world of to-day.

We have seen on the small scale of our own country in recent years what unity of spirit and of organisation means to the work for young people. It was simply like the spreading of fire, and now in this village and now in that town a section of the young people's association sprang up. And young men and women, who had hardly ever left their birthplace, went out for a conference and spent four days in the country. That is what a youth movement can be and must be.

It is not the same thing as a student movement and I think it never will be. There may be as much contact as is possible between the two, but after all the problems coming up and being discussed in a highly-trained academic world are not quite the same as those which present themselves in the broader circles of young middle-class people and of young labourers. But after all the spirit, the esential of both must be the same: prayer and devotion, vocation and activity.

And now to conclude : what about our meeting here in Leiden and the youth movement? It is very nice to have congresses and to speak all sorts of languages and to meet many interesting people, but unless some simple foundations are laid here in these days, it is not worth while to go out for a long journey.

As far as I see our meeting can do two things in connection with the problem we are discussing. In the first place we can put this question : Are those who are here—and who are expected to be here not as visitors looking on from outside, but as men and women, bearing the full responsibility of their leadership of free Christianity—are they willing to work on these lines, to take up in their own countries work of this character or—to be quite modest in my claims—to keep their eyes open in this direction? That seems to be rather an academic question. It just depends on the way you look at it. If the different liberal workers, who are giving their hearts to work in student circles or in some sort of youth movement all over the world, could say : "There is an international body of earnest and high-minded people behind me and if I ask their help, and if I ask them to come over to join a conference and to give an address, they will do it, if possible," that would be an important element in this work. If a meeting of free Christians and other religious liberals could declare : "We acknowledge the high importance of this international work for the spirit of free religion and beyond that for the whole of modern culture and ultimately for the coming of God's kingdom," that would be an act of faith and goodwill and a promise of co-operation and collaboration.

But in the second place, a meeting like ours can do more than that. In the little informal discussion on Monday evening, which I mentioned before, the proposition was made, that there should be established a simple bureau, a central place for the free religious student movements of the world.

The acceptance of this proposition may be of some importance for the future of our problem. It was a great pleasure for me that in the name of the leading students of our Dutch Free Christian Students Association I was authorised to offer our help for the establishment of this bureau. Now that we in Holland are shortly to have our own home—perhaps the first and the only free-religious student house in the world—we feel obliged to do whatever we can to help this ever growing movement of new religious life in student circles. That is what can be done now. Whether you will do more and discuss the possibility of a central bureau for all the youth movements of all kinds, working on the same religious basis, I must leave to you. I for my part am very glad that we have gained this one point : a centre for our student work.

This meeting can do a third thing. It can sketch in some general broad lines the activities of the bureau. And it seems to me that that should embrace these three points : (1) the interchange

of publications; (2) and more important, the correspondence about the different movements, that is to say, the encouragement and the help of the student work in other nations, by giving advice and information; (3) the sending out of good delegates from one nation to the other, delegates who partly come to learn and to look on and to go home again with new insight and new enthusiasm, partly to give what they have themselves, their lectures, their addresses, but first of all their personality, their soul, their faith. On these lines an international student movement in our spirit would grow and gradually would become a real force in the student world and would then begin to influence the whole miserable situation in which humanity finds itself at the present time.

And then in the fourth place one more thing has to be done. This meeting has to declare as its earnest wish that in the free Christian congresses that will probably be held in future, a day must be set apart for the problems of the younger generation. We want to hear the students and the other representatives of youth themselves. That can be arranged in various ways, but somehow or other there must be discussion of the great problems of free religious youth in connection with our congress.

That is my conclusion. I have been speaking about the great problems of free religious youth. You may think that for a young delegate I have spoken rather boldly to this venerable meeting of the leading people of free Christianity. I have only one reason for doing so. Because it *must* be done. The problems of an international free religious students league and of an international league of all the younger free religious associations are not problems to be discussed, but to be solved. There are enough difficulties, but what we want is courage and enthusiasm, and the holy spirit of God, who gives us His blessing.

THE MORAL BACK-GROUND OF MODERN SOCIETY.

By Professor Dr. Heering.

Nobody here present will deny that this background is exceedingly dark. What nations and individuals need most to lead a good life is a firm moral standard, and this standard is wanting sorely. This fact has several causes. Protestant freedom of thought, which we dare to profess because of our confidence in truth, has many dangers. In the nineteenth century theories on life have been proclaimed, which have been the cause of much evil. But we must not over-value this influence. The heart of a nation is morally sheltered against extravagant theories. Far more evil has been worked by the commercial and industrial type of our age and especially by the war. This war was not a

theory but a fact, a grievous reality, at which by far the greater part of Europe had to assist in its acts, its thoughts aud feelings. We shall not overlook all the magnificent sacrifices, all the heroism, shown in the war. Perhaps we neutrals are not able to value these things enough. But we know too, that thousands of those who have sacrificed themselves now ask in despair: "Wherefore has it all been done?" We cannot and may not forget that we have lived for years in a world of hatred and of lies and cruelty and misery, a world that laughed at Christianity, in which everything that makes life worth living, threatened to starve. They were long years not only of getting hardened aud roughened, but also years of bewilderment and perplexity. The best among the people could not combine very well their duties as soldiers and as Christians. But the soldier had to win from the Christian. That was ordered by cruel necessity.

But the result of all this is, that we did not know, and we do not know yet: what is really good? and what is really bad? During the war many answers have been given. But not one of them was able to satisfy the Christian thinker. Even the most elementary morals of the Ten Commandments, as Christians have been taught to understand them, were turned topsy-turvy. No wonder that all the young people, coming back from the trenches, and those who had been fed on war-principles at home, did not pay great attention to the former conceptions of good and of evil. Reality was quite different. When everything is allowed against human life, which has no more value, and can be taken away from us to-morrow, life itself becomes solely a short opportunity to enjoy oneself as much as possible. One has a right to that. Procure this right, quickly and without scruples. Take from life as much as you can get! An impudent and self-relying egoism took the lead in the hearts of a great part of the younger generation. The sexual license which everybody complains of is one of its consequences.

We must frankly admit that we have lost sight of the ethical standard and cannot rely any longer on human morals. I know that human morals and the ethical norm are not the same. These morals are a turbid image of the norm, but for the great mass of the people they have always appeared as a strong brake on which you might depend. "One does not do such things." "One does not say such things." "That is improper, indecent." This support in life has given way. This brake is damaged. And in so far as one sought in morals the world's authority only, one was right not to acknowledge it. "Don't mind what the world, what the great murderer says," is what G. Frenssen, the German Author, makes the hero of his last book say.

The war has wrought greater ravages in the minds of the people in this time than in other times; not only because it was a fight of millions, but above all things because, firstly, the roughness

of the Middle Ages has passed away and barbarism is felt as such, and secondly, because our modern technical and chemical war surpasses in horror everything that cruel brains could think of in time of peace. The compromises between our ideals and reality, to which this world is for ever forcing us, become quite unbearable in war-time, even for coarse people. War is no longer in keeping with modern culture. This culture is sure to burst some time. One more war and the funeral bells will ring across our whole civilisation of which only the technical part will remain standing erect like a ghostly skeleton.

The victims of the moral ravages wrought by the war are all those young men who shoot down unscrupulously (and the war has taught them to hit well) eminent people, indispensable to their country. A victim also was that Dutch student, of rather good reputation, who threw a bomb at the house of a member of the military court, which had sentenced a comrade who objected to military service. The State, which taught him to make and to throw bombs (which hit innocent individuals too) ought to have taken half the blame. The State which imposes war-morals no longer has the right to claim peace-morals another time.

The world needs above all things a distinct moral standard acknowledged by every one, that the great masses may again get to know morals which deserve confidence and obedience. The norms of justice, of reverence, of fellowship will have to emerge from the moral deluge. These norms cannot be invented or enacted ; we must believe in them, even though all visible things plead to the contrary. Thank God, this creed still exists in the hearts of thousands, for this belief is the world's only chance of salvation. And this salvation is the great task and calling of the Christian Church, of the Liberal Church too. But of one thing we may be certain : if our religion is in some degree to answer to this calling, it will have to change its attitude and its behaviour. Dr. Mellone, Secretary to the British and Foreign Unitarian Association, was quite right to say in *The Hibbert Journal* to Mr. Major, one of the Modernists in the Church of England, who appealed to the " saving power of the Church " : " What has become of this saving power during these last ten years ? The impotence of the Church is an astounding fact in the modern world."

The churches have had their great merits in cultivating personal piety, but they did not take much notice of the world. The result of this has been that the world went the wrong way without hearing the Church. Many members of the Church were obliged to lead a double life, and forfeited part of their sincerity, which resulted in making many noble minds turn away from the Church, while the Church had lost already the victims of our industrial modern society. Far too much the Church was influenced by people who lived comfortably in this world, by

worldly people and worldly ideas, and by the awe of worldly powers and authorities. Spiritual people were not allowed to have an opinion about the ways of the world, and as a rule they did not have any. Their education and their life kept them standing aloof. So the Church kept silent every time it ought to have spoken. It left the path free for the press, and lived at peace with circumstances directly at war with Christianity.

Where under the pressure of sharp commercial competition the conditions of the wage-earners were astoundingly bad, the Church nearly always kept silent, perhaps more out of ignorance than out of fear. We were very glad to read that the American Church broke this silence and that the Committee of research of the "Interchurch Movement" published in 1921 an astonishing statement about the conditions in the steel-industry and the strike in 1919 against the 12 hours' working-day; showing the great difference there is between social and political democracy. In truth, thousands of Christians in different countries will have blessed the American Church for this inquiry, and will have welcomed it as an encouraging sign of better times to come.

It is not enough—although it is of great importance—that the Church ten times more than she used to do fights against nationalism, national pride, revenge and hatred of race. It is not enough. For the war did not only result from these causes, but also from thirst for money and sharp competition which mark and devour our modern society. The economic and commercial causes of the war are in my eyes just as great as the other ones. Without being contradicted it has been stated in the beginning of this year at the inaugural meeting of the Dutch Society of Social and Ethical Politics, where people of different parties and different principles met :—

1. That the war has not been an intruder into the lives of the nations, but that it was the result of their way of living—which has not changed considerably since then.

2. That the conflict between the interests of the nations in many ways reflects the conflict inside the nations, the struggle between people and classes, who do not fight so much on behalf of the community as on behalf of themselves and against each other.

We are being driven, much more than is good for us, by material concerns, which overshadow the spiritual concerns. How easy it has been in the economic collapse to make people forget the spiritual one and to silence the longing for social reform. The society of Christian nations is ruled by Mammon's powerful spirit, against which the spirit of Christ can do little or nothing. Very often in the midst of worldly battles, the Christians let it fulfil the role of Don Quixote fighting against windmills. We must distinctly see and acknowledge this fact. Then it may happen that a spirit of Christian revolt will arise which will make all other revolutions superfluous. Then there is a chance of

changing the opinion of the East about our Western culture, which was reported in this somewhat exaggerated way at the Congress at Glasgow of the Student Christian Movement in 1921*: "Your Christian belief doesn't value money, your society values it more than anything else. Your Christian belief imposes upon you to minister to others, your society preaches to let yourself be ministered to by others, to rule, and to beat your competitors. I understand quite well that you cannot put your exalted creed into practice, but it astonishes me that you seek your duty and your happiness in exactly the reverse. The normal condition of your social order is an economic civil war, which you hardly trouble to conceal. Your creed is exalted, but your civilisation is a nightmare of envy, hate, and uncharitableness. I would forego the former in order to escape the latter, and I hope that my fellow-countrymen will escape the contamination of Christian society in order that they may continue to retain some of their own not wholly un-Christian virtues."

Let half of this be exaggerated, ladies and gentlemen. But let the other half burn into our heart and conscience! What Professor Otto of Marburg said last year to our students, you will all heartily approve of: "Now that we are able to consider the consequences of the great disaster—consequences, which are still perplexing us—it seems to me as if God were looking at us, and asking: How long is this to last?"

What has the Christian Church to do, now, more than ever?

1. Of course the first thing is to seek personal contact with God and with the spirit of Jesus Christ. We can only work for God's Kingdom, if we feel ourselves inwardly bound to Him.

2. We have to seek contact with the poor and the destitute, and try to see the world as they see it.

3. We have to seek contact with other nations. We cannot love what we do not know. We can only love what we know. We have to show above all that Christianity is an International power.

4. We have to get insight into those political and economical questions which rule the lives of people and of States.

5. We must try to make the League of Nations—born from the mind of a noble man—a power in the world.

6. We must sharply criticise nationalistic tendencies and the power of the capitalistic system.

7. We must reject all double morals—one standard for our personal, and one for our social life, one for national, and one for international life, one for the time of peace and one for war-time.

8. We have to rouse a great longing for a better world, a world in which the general interests of the community triumph over egotism, a longing for a society which does not make the coming of God's Kingdom impossible but helps to promote it.

*"Christ and Human Need," p, 142, 143.

Our religion has got the principles and the power to do this. Whenever a greater feeling of fellowship comes in the world—and it will not come about I am sure without necessary alterations in the social structure—more respect for human beings, more veneration for the worth of personal life, the value of which is far above every material value—then we shall get to know again what is really good and what is really wrong ; then a distinct moral standard will arise, then good morals will find an anchorage, then our laws, the unwritten and also the written ones, will be respected. It is a difficult task for our religion, but we cannot put it away. It is also the only way to get hold of our youth. At this moment there is only one Christianity that can save the world : a brave, manly, fighting Christianity, that is not to be laughed at.

And it seems to me our liberal religion, in its own modest way, may be a pioneer. Dogmatic religion always feels more than we do all that separates people. It is difficult for this type of religion to co-operate with those who think differently, though the Copenhagen Congress is an event to be glad of in these dark times. It has always been the glory and the power of liberal Christianity that it was willing to offer its hand to the left and to the right, paying more attention to what unites than to what separates, minding more what God works in the hearts of the people, than what people believe about God, convinced as we are that God is far more great and powerful than our creed.

We cannot imagine God without man, and we cannot imagine man without God. Humanity is for us not only a sociological and ethical principle but also a religious one. In humanity we see mankind united, united in God. Humanity, deeply understood, is God's will, God's glory and God's kingdom. Christ says : " Whatever you have done unto the least of my brethren, you have done unto Me." If we, with God's help, in which we trust, are earnestly trying to rouse and to strengthen the spirit of humanity in our society, and to bring this spirit also into the social and political structure of this poor divided world, then we shall secure for ourselves the right that we have so nearly lost, the right to pray the Lord's Prayer.

THE LIBERAL RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT IN AMERICA.

I AM aware of the difficulty which I face in trying to give to you an account of the liberal religious situation in the United States in an address of twenty minutes. I can only venture to give you an impression of certain striking aspects of that situation.

You remember (for I suppose it was true in every nation) what great hopes all liberal Churchmen cherished during the War, of a great revival of liberal religion—a renaissance of the free faith! We dreamed about it, and we talked about it, and we believed that it was coming. We used to say that, after this fearful experience of life's realities, men would no longer be satisfied with the artificial and the conventional and the traditional in religion. We are all aware, however, that these hopes have been entirely disappointed. There has been no great revival of liberal religion. On the contrary, there has been (I am speaking, now, for the United States) a great reinforcement of orthodoxy.

It is not necessary for me to mention in detail the materialistic cults and forms of religion which have gained great sway over many people. Men and women have seemed to want a religion that they could handle and see and taste and we have felt that, in many cases, this was a not unnatural result of the reaction from the war experience. I want to mention, in a word, the movement which bears the name of Fundamentalism and which has extraordinarily strong followings, particularly in the Baptist denomination, in America. It is based on the acceptance of the literal truth of the Bible and lays great stress on the prophecies in the Book of Revelation, looking forward to the second coming of Christ. This movement has, I repeat, tremendous strength in certain parts of the United States, notably the South and West.

Now, while on the one hand, there is what I have called this reinforcement of orthodoxy; on the other hand, there is a widespread tendency toward irreligion. For example, a member of the highest legislative body in the land says: "Every morning the blessing of Almighty God has been invoked on the Senate by its Chaplain. If it has ever produced any benefit up to this time, I have been unable to perceive it."

We live in the midst of an elaborate life of ostentation and display, pursuing increasingly amusement, and tolerating a supercilious, scoffing attitude toward the high ideals and deep purposes of life; and, at the same time, we behold half-empty Churches and straggling Sunday Schools, yawning theological seminaries, an ill-paid ministry—in short, an organised religious life that has little or no effect on the people.

Comment on this condition reached an extreme in a book published within the year, entitled, 'Civilisation in the United States,' which was a symposium prepared by some thirty young "intellectuals." This book deals with all the institutions and

tendencies in our national life, with one extraordinary exception. While there are essays on the courts, the schools, the universities, the theatre, politics, &c., there is no essay on the Church or religion! The editor-in-chief explains this extraordinary fact by saying that it was next to impossible to get anyone to write on the subject; because all who were asked said, almost unanimously, that real religious feeling in America has disappeared; that the Church has become a "purely social and political institution"; that the country is in the grip of "protestant clericalism"—an astounding statement, whatever it may mean!—and, N.B., that they were not interested in the topic! Here, of course, was the vital secret of the whole matter and the key to the attitude which the book reflects of distinct pessimism regarding the present state and future promise of religion. While this is an extreme position, none of us can fail to be aware of the great lack in the common life as well as in the lives of individuals of a religious point of view. It is easy to say that the Church has failed to adapt its message to modern requirements, or that a religion intellectually and ecclesiastically autocratic is not compatible with a democratic world, or that the conventional theology is unreal beside the vital issues of every day, but the absence of true and noble motives from most of our human activities can be explained only by the fact that the religious sense and impulse are wanting. It lies with liberal religion to develop a conscience capable of resisting the complex temptations of to-day; to cultivate a moral sense strong enough to guide men through this modern stress; and to implant a spiritual impulse deep enough to make men seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. Liberal religion must speak the living truth with a living voice and, reaching out to touch all sorts and conditions of men, must offer to the world a hitherto unequalled opportunity for helpfulness and service.

I feel moved to speak in particular of some of the events which have taken place within our Unitarian fellowship during the past three years, and ask your pardon for thus narrowing for a moment the field of liberal religion in America.

One of the outstanding events in our fellowship, was the formation of the Unitarian Laymen's League, numbering now in the neighbourhood of 15,000 members—an organization conceived and put into operation by high-minded laymen, resolved to band themselves together on a religious basis for the service of the general good. You will be interested to know that this body of laymen has now engaged one of our foremost preachers, Dr. William L. Sullivan, as a missionary-at-large. Dr. Sullivan is to go throughout the country, holding mission services in communities where there is no liberal Church or where the liberal Church is in need of revitalising and stimulating.

The other outstanding event was the so-called "Unitarian Campaign," by which our Churches were aroused under the

watchword of "Money for a campaign; not a campaign for money," to a sense of togetherness and an actuality of co-operation that had never before been realised. Over $3,000,000 was raised, and the membership of our churches was increased 25 per cent.

To turn finally to the problem of liberalism throughout the world, as it seems to me, I would suggest that there is a three-fold need if we are to touch the world's heart with our message, and bring the world's work under our leadership.

The need is, first, for *definiteness*. Liberal religion has so long been the diffusion of vague theories without a concrete form of expression or method. We have felt so sure of ourselves as the "children of light" that we have been unwilling to learn wisdom from the "children of this world." But liberal religion, if it is to be a concrete, living thing, must move like an army with banners and on its banners must be emblazoned the definite, appealing message of a stable and formulated faith.

Another need is for *beauty*. We are thinking about the souls of the youth of the world. We are anxious to draw them to our side. We must, then, appeal to them through that beauty with which it is possible to clothe our reverently reasonable religion. How often the presentation of liberalism has been bare and devoid of all warmth or color; how often, therefore, has it repelled rather than attracted the eager, aspiring young men and women!

And the last and highest great need, as I see it, for this liberal Christianity of ours, is a clearer preaching and a truer following of the *personality* of *Jesus Christ*. Whatever our individual differences as liberal Christians may be as regards his person and mission, we are one in acknowledging his personality as the supremely helpful and redeeming personality in human history. Coming together as his followers, is not our free faith a stronger and deeper reality, and one that must draw to it the multitudes in this world who are hungry for the bread of spiritual life?

PALFREY PERKINS.

Boston, U.S.A.

THE LIBERAL MOVEMENT IN ITALY.

IN bringing greetings from Italian friends, to the representatives of Religious Liberals here assembled, my thought goes back to those forerunners of ours, who not for the exchange of ideas, not to draw closer the ties of brotherhood with their co-religionists, left their native towns of Siena, of Florence, of Saluzzo, of Cosenza, but fled to escape persecution, torture and the stake. The contrast of the changed conditions, serves to make us more highly appreciate the liberty of conscience and of knowledge that modern civilisation allows. *Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire quae velis, et quae sentias, dicere licet.* Yet this liberty of to-day, is not as valuable in its

negative exterior force, as for the positive and constructive power of the interior life. It is not possible, in a few minutes, to give an adequate account of the liberal religious movement in Italy, a fact very complex, that has relationship with political and economic life, comes from the cultural depths of our people and is fed by the needs of a religious adjustment more responsive to the spirit and culture of our times. Therefore I will limit myself to delineating rapidly its particular difficulties, its methods and ideals.

In the years preceding the world war, there did not escape the notice of those, who could observe at close quarters, many signs that there was in some classes a true and sincere religious awakening. During the war this revival was accentuated in the army, and in families of soldiers, but it was evidently of a temporary character, due exclusively to the desire for divine aid in times of danger. Then a sincere, religious, and lasting revival, and therefore worthy of mention, a Liberal religious movement, with a mystic character, manifested itself, more especially in the middle classes and Students Societies.

By education and temperament, the need of a liberal religious movement should manifest itself, above all, among the intellectual, who are more in contact with the traditional mundane culture of Reform, where minds also are more awake to the value of freedom of investigation. The lack of inwardness in the religious life of the people is tending now by reaction decidedly in the direction of mysticism, and the marked lack of religious culture, that would be able to control their beliefs, awakens a desire for investigation, in the varied fields of Historical Philosophical and Theological science.

Modernism in Italy generally gives preference to social and dogmatic problems, rather than to the spiritual, and while it exhausted itself in disputes, and was weakened by the blows of authority, there arose outside of the Church a religious awakening, drawn from the pure, vital fountains of a liberal tradition, weakened sometimes, but not extinct, and kept alive by single solitary souls.

This awakening has undertaken a new task: to make the revived religious consciences of Italians unite for the revision, not so much of dogmas (under which past generations had been retarded) as of the religious bases of the interior life, in order to understand the aim and value of human existence and of the consistency of ideals of social justice and of international peace. This is a task which requires a spiritual reconstruction that must be the foundation and rule of the new society.

In order to value properly this spiritual awakening we must consider the difficulties it has had to surmount.

The principle difficulties were: (1) the inhibitive decrees of the Catholic Church, that *fears* every organised movement that may disturb it. (2) The education of the people who have been taught to consider it wrong to trouble themselves about religious

questions, it being sufficient for their salvation to trust the care of their souls to the Church. Consequently they have been left without religious culture.

It will seem strange to you when I say, that in all Italy, for many years, only one Professor, Baldassere Labanca, a member of the Association of Liberi Credenti, taught, but with much opposition, in the Roman University, the history of Christianity, and that solitary thinkers like R. Mariano or the Unitarian Mamiani and Sbarbaro, well worthy of being noted, even abroad, and a minister of Public Instruction, Ruggero Bonghi, should remain, for many years, the only teachers to guide Italians in the way of research in liberal religious studies. It was urgent then, above all, to help this deplorable deficiency in religious culture and to give a new direction to the study of modern forms of religion. Little by little as these studies were followed with greater interest, the need of an increasing and decidedly religious attitude manfested itself more urgently. In a few years translations of works about modern religions were multiplied, and the number and seriousness of original works grew *pari passu.* Professions of faith multiplied, chasing away tacit hypocrisy and the prudent concealment that had not dared reveal the most intimate experience of the soul.

An enquiry into the religious faith of Italians promoted shortly before the war by the Riforma Italiana gave clear evidence of a true and earnest religious awakening, pressing upon the old borders of Orthodoxy. The life, although short, of reviews like ' Nova et Vetera ' and the ' Rinnovamento,' the publication of articles upon contemporaneous religious problems in the daily papers, which had never been done formerly, the growing interest in periodical and non-periodical publications regarding spiritual problems, the moral questions agitated by R. Bracco and Sem Benelli in the Theatre, some cases of unquiet consciences analysed by the subtle Art of Fogazzaro in his romances, the fresh religious feeling that sprung from the poetry of Giovanni Pascoli, when as yet the echo of the conversion of Arturo Graf to the liberal faith had not died away—all were evidently signs of a spiritual awakening. When it was examined it had no precise and confessional character, but it sought to find its way in the field of modern religious knowledge. All this is notable, for it signalised undoubtedly the method to follow for the development of a Liberal Religious movement in Italy. Now there are several active Chairs in Italian universities, not one alone, where young and able masters teach the History of Religions. But outside the universities there pulsates the need of liberal teaching and a new religious adjustment. There are about twelve reviews that treat, some exclusively, others by preference, religious questions without credal controversy. We have in Italy circles of University Students for Religious Culture, extending from Palermo, Naples, and Rome, to Bologna, Genoa,

Turin and other cities. A few years ago these circles would have been unthinkable. I myself have presided over one of these circles for about two years. To these belong a few observing Catholics, some modernists, and several Orthodox Protestants. Of the remainder I should say a large majority are Religious Liberals.

The activities of these circles are largely cultural. The students come together to hear lectures or readings given by professors or other competent persons. Excursions into the country or other reunions are organised with the aim of discussing and deepening religious faith. Other societies for religious and moral culture, composed largely of ladies, have as the basis of their activities tolerance toward different religious beliefs and love for your neighbour. Among these last there is a strong mystic, theosophic tendency, I will not detail here their particular beliefs and habits, I wish simply to call attention to a very large movement among women who, no longer satisfied with old religious beliefs, are taking the first steps along the toilsome way of investigation among mystic theosophic experiences.

I will mention also another Women's Association, the ' Sorores Lucis ' that has groups in several cities. Their interest turns toward mystic Tagorian-Theism. This also shows the need of a new religious adjustment. More worthy still of mention is a National Association for moral improvement composed of many students. It has groups in all the principal cities in the kingdom. It is divided into two sections, one for the young, and one for the older. The members of this Association pledge themselves to absolute purity of sexual conduct. This Association of diverse beliefs, united in one aim of a high social value, is a school of reciprocal tolerance and of mutual understanding and goodwill.

The Association for Moral and Religious Progress over which I have the honour to preside, with its headquarters in Florence, has relations with some of these and other kindred associations in the field of common activities. It has a larger programme, because it aims to combine cultural with social work. It has organised courses of lectures and readings upon the History of Religions, and upon actual religious problems that have relation to political and economic life. These courses are given by competent men, and fill a void felt in our schools. We have besides a large programme of social activities. Our work extends largely among educated circles and students, but without neglecting other fields of opportunity. We have sections for both young men and women students. It seems to us more necessary for civilisation, as it also seemed to Mazzini, to mould minds than merely to instruct the intellect. By periodical publications, works of propaganda, correspondence with isolated individuals, and groups scattered here and there all over Italy, by conferences and lectures, circulating libraries, benevolent work in needy families, especially among those stricken by the War, by aiding culprits with moral re-education,

by propaganda among peasants and workmen, by all these means we are trying to sow the seeds of moral and religious progress.

From the New Prisons of Rome at the close of the last century that liberal spirit, almost a prophet of the new times, Pietro Sbarbaro, wrote that " notwithstanding we are amidst griefs and disenchantments, ruins and vices without number and without name, we are not tending toward an abyss, but toward a new order more ideally perfect, we are not hastening toward destruction, but toward the perfecting of Christianity," and re-evoking a new Christ he saw him arise from the shades of darkness and superstition, not immoveable, with arms extended upon a cross, contemplating impotently the ignominy and desolation of the world, but resplendent with a new glory in the eyes of the redeemed people, with arms on high blessing the future world in its titanic labour for justice and truth, and sanctifying it to the inviolability of human personality, to the joy of work, and the harmony of nations. In the crises that harass our times and threaten to destroy conditions suitable for the development of civilisation, our urgent task is, so it has seemed to us, to unite to dedicate all our energies in order to create a new world of life and action.

All tepid indifference, every delay is in our eyes culpable. The spirit of modern religious feeling was divined by those who watched over the dawn of the last century by Mazzini, Channing, and Martineau. It is not so much a doctrine as a life ; it is pedagogy and it persuades children—it is culture, and it addresses directive minds—it is compassion, and it comforts the humble and suffering —it is love, and it seeks those who revile it. The spirit of modern religion loves action more than theory. Rather than singe its wings in the smouldering fires of vain disputes, it prefers to set the example of goodness and of sacrifice ; rather than retard its steps with following in the footprints of the past, it turns hopefully toward an horizon of progress, and of light. These are the aims, methods and ideals of the Liberal Religious Movement in Italy.

MARIO PUGLISI.

Florence.

THE first meeting of the Executive Committee will be held at Arnheim, Holland, in the house of the Free Christian Student Movement on January 4 and 5, 1923.

J. E. Francis, Athenæum Press, 11 and 13 Bream's Buildings. Chancery Lane, E.C.4